

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 16893 121644Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----109268 121647Z /44

O 121638Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1379
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T CAIRO 16893

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MOPS PINT LE IS EG SY
SUBJECT: TALK WITH VP MUBARAK ON LEBANESE SITUATION

REF: (A) STATE 174090 (B) CAIRO 16659 (C) STATE 172481

1. AT MEETING WITH VP MUBARAK THIS MORNING, I TOLD HIM OF MY TALK WITH MFA UNDERSEC KHALIL AND ALSO BRIEFED HIM ON STEPS WE HAVE TAKEN TO TRY TO DEFUSE LEBANESE CRISIS. SPECIFICALLY, I TOLD HIM OF OUR EFFORTS TO PERSUADE SARKIS TO WITHDRAW HIS RESIGNATION, TO URGE THE SYRIANS AND THE LEBANESE CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADERS TO ABIDE BY THE EXISTING FRAGILE CEASE FIRE, AND TO URGE THE ISRAELIS TO PERSUADE THEIR LEBANESE CHRISTIAN FRIENDS TO COOL IT. WE BELIEVE GOE SHARES OUR CONCERN ABOUT DANGERS OF LEBANESE SITUATION AND WOULD WELCOME ANYTHING EGYPTIANS MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO TO ASSIST IN DEFUSING IT. A MESSAGE FROM SADAT TO SARKIS, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LATTER'S REMAINING IN OFFICE MIGHT BE OF SOME HELP. TOLD HIM WE WOULD ALSO WELCOME ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS GOE MIGHT HAVE.

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2. MUBARAK DID NOT SEEM TO KNOW OF MY EARLIER TALK WITH KHALIL, WHICH WAS PROBABLY REPORTED TO KAMEL. MUBARAK, LIKE KHALIL, AGREED THAT THE LEBANESE SITUATION IS DANGEROUS AND WORRISOME, BUT ALSO SHOWED NO GREAT SENSE OF URGENCY. HE UNDERTOOK TO INFORM SADAT IN AUSTRIA AND THOUGHT THE LATTER MIGHT BE WILLING TO SEND SARKIS A MESSAGE URGING THE LEBANESE PRESIDENT NOT TO RESIGN AT

THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE. OTHERWISE, HE HAD NO SUGGESTIONS.

3. MUBARAK WAS INTERESTED IN SYRIAN, CHRISTIAN AND ISRAELI POSITIONS. WE HAD JUST FINISHED A TALK ON WEIZMAN IN ANOTHER CONTEXT AND MUBARAK ASKED IF WE HAD DISCUSSED THE LEBANESE CRISIS WITH WEIZMAN. I TOLD HIM THAT WE ARE IN REGULAR TOUCH WITH WEIZMAN ON THE MATTER AND THAT THE ISRAELI DEFMIN HAS TOLD US HE HAS SENT CLEAR SIGNALS TO THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS TO COOL IT. SINCE WEIZMAN IS HELD IN RATHER HIGH REGARD HERE, THIS SEEMED TO PLEASE MUBARAK.

4. SUBSEQUENTLY, MUBARAK'S PRINCIPAL AIDE, USAMA AL BAZ, CAME TO THE EMBASSY AND I REITERATED TO HIM WHAT WE ARE DOING. AT ONE POINT, AL BAZ THOUGHT THAT, IF SADAT WISHES TO DO SO, HE COULD SEND A MESSAGE TO ASSAD ON THE SUBJECT. ALTHOUGH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ARE BROKEN, AL BAZ NOTED THAT THE "HOT LINE" BETWEEN SADAT AND ASSAD IS STILL OPEN, BUT HAS NOT OF LATE BEEN USED. I SAID WE WERE NOT URGING SADAT TO SEND A MESSAGE TO ASSAD AND EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT ANY SUCH MESSAGE ON LEBANON MIGHT NOT BE TOO WELL RECEIVED BY ASSAD. AL BAZ AGREED AND SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD ALSO BE SADAT'S VIEW.

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5. COMMENT: AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, EGYPTIANS EXPRESS PRO FORMA CONCERN ABOUT LEBANESE SITUATION, BUT ARE GENERALLY RELAXED ABOUT IT. THIS IS NOT TOO SURPRISING. EGYPT'S TWO GREATEST OPPONENTS ON THE LEBANESE SCENE ARE AT EACH OTHERS THROATS. THE EGYPTIANS CONTINUE TO SUSPECT SYRIAN AMBITIONS IN LEBANON AND WOULD LIKE THE SYRIAN MILITARY OUT. AS FAR AS THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS ARE CONCERNED, THE EGYPTIANS HAVE LITTLE USE FOR THEM AND REGARD THEM AS WILLING ISRAELI PAWNS. GOE IN ANY CASE HAS NO DIRECT CONTACT WITH EITHER THE SYRIANS OR THE CHRISTIANS AND HAS COME TO RECOGNIZE, ALBEIT RELUCTANTLY, THAT IT HAS NO REAL ROLE TO PLAY ON LEBANESE FRONT. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO16893
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780285-0955
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780771/aaaachmv.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 89724977-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 174090, 78 CAIRO 16659, 78 STATE 172481
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2042929
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALK WITH VP MUBARAK ON LEBANESE SITUATION
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, PINT, LE, IS, EG, SY, (MUBARAK, MUHAMMAD HUSNI), (EILTS, HERMANN F)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/89724977-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014